Horse Chestnut Tree Condition Observations and Proposed Works

18 Warnham Road Horsham

Prepared by GreenEdge Grounds Maintenance Ltd
For consideration by Horsham District Council Tree Officer
Inspection 13 October 2026 | Report 14 October 2026

Purpose and requested consideration

We submit the recorded defects and photographs to support consideration of works to the horse chestnut at 18 Warnham Road. The tree has been reported as protected by a Tree Preservation Order. We ask the Tree Officer to consider two alternatives: reduction to a standing monolith 4 m above ground level, or complete removal to near ground level.

The tree exhibits extensive internal decay and hollowing in both main stems. A longitudinal crack was identified during the inspection at the base of the south-facing fork. This stem leans towards the road and over the footpath. The combination raises serious concern over stem integrity and the risk of failure affecting pedestrians and road users. We recommend remedial works and ask the Council to consider the two options set out in this report.

Tree and site particulars

Item	Recorded detail
Species	Horse chestnut, identification supplied by GreenEdge
Tree reference	HC1 for this report; supplied TPO reference 0098, Area A1
South-facing stem height	Estimated 15–17 m from ground to maximum height; overall tree height no separately confirmed
Main trunk diameter	Estimated 1,220 mm at approximately 1.5 m above ground (4 ft)
Overall crown spread	Estimated 14 m across the crown
Main fork height	Estimated 3 m above ground
Footpath centre distance	Approximately 7.6 m from the trunk
Road centre distance	Approximately 11.9 m from the trunk
Nearest property point	Approximately 18.3 m from the trunk

Dimensions and distances are estimates. Footpath and road distances refer to their centres, not their nearest edges. They do not constitute a measured site plan.

Inspection and evidence basis

Ryan Dodds inspected the tree on 13 October 2026. He has ten years of practical tree surgery experience and holds tree surgery qualifications relevant to carrying out the proposed works. This report records his inspection findings, supported by photographs and estimated measurements, and sets out GreenEdge's proposals for remedial works.

The assessment is based on the recorded visible defects and photographs, including elevated views into the cavities. Residual sound wood thickness, crack depth and the full internal extent of decay have not been quantified in the evidence available for this report. The findings establish substantial visible defects and a credible failure concern, but do not quantify the likelihood or timing of failure. Structural suitability of any retained monolith requires confirmation.

Recorded defects

North-facing stem towards the property

The north-facing stem contains an internal cavity accessed through Hole 2. The photographs show hollowing and exposed degraded wood within the cavity. The extent of decay beyond the visible opening and the remaining sound wood thickness have not been quantified.

South-facing stem towards the road and footpath

Four holes, numbered 1, 3, 4 and 5 in the appendix, were identified as openings into one larger internal cavity in the south-facing stem. The inspection identified extensive hollowing extending considerably upwards within the stem. The upward view through Hole 1 illustrates the vertical continuation of the cavity and degraded internal wood. Its full length and remaining sound wood thickness have not been quantified.

Opening 4 is reported as an old pruning wound. Opening 5 is suspected to originate from historic branch breakage; its origin is unconfirmed. Photographs show wound margins, exposed degraded wood and internal voids. The five openings should not be interpreted as five separate cavities.

Longitudinal crack at the fork

A longitudinal crack was identified starting at the base of the main fork, approximately 3 m above ground, and extending upwards along the south-facing stem. The photographs show an open longitudinal separation with adjacent degraded tissue. Its position at the fork, in combination with internal hollowing, raises serious concern over the integrity of the stem and union. Crack depth, its full upper extent and any recent movement have not been established.

Embedded metal fittings

An additional photograph supplied to GreenEdge shows embedded metal fittings, including a chain and rod-like fitting. Their age, purpose, condition and any connection to historic bracing are unconfirmed. Their presence should be recorded for further inspection and work planning; they are not assumed to provide structural support or to be the cause of the defects.

Targets and significance

The south-facing stem leans towards the road and over the footpath, placing pedestrians and road users within the potential impact area of a stem failure. The north-facing stem faces the property. Failure onto either occupied public route could result in serious injury and damage. This setting makes the recorded decay and cracking a significant management concern. Site distances are estimates; usage levels and precise failure trajectories have not been measured.

Alternative proposed works

Option 1 Retain a standing monolith at 4 m

Remove the crown and reduce the main stems to a maximum retained height of 4 m above ground level, retaining the lower trunk and fork as a habitat feature, subject to consent and confirmation that the retained section is suitable.

This option would substantially reduce crown loading, while retaining standing woody habitat. The fork at approximately 3 m and at least part of the reported crack would remain. The retained section must therefore be assessed for sound wood, cavity and crack extent, root and basal condition, and the consequences of any future failure. A monitoring interval and any access restrictions should be specified by the person competent to assess that retained structure. A 4 m height is a proposal, not an established safe retention height.

Option 2 Complete removal to near ground level

Sectionally dismantle and remove the tree to near ground level, subject to consent, with stump grinding excluded unless separately specified. Replacement planting species, size, location and timing are to be agreed with the Council where required.

This option removes the standing stems associated with the recorded defects. It also removes the existing canopy and standing habitat. It is proposed as the alternative where the condition of the lower trunk and fork does not support suitable monolith retention, or where the Council considers complete removal appropriate on the evidence.

Position for the application

GreenEdge recommends remedial works to address the substantial decay, hollowing and cracking identified during inspection. We ask the Council to consider reduction to a 4 m habitat monolith where the retained trunk and fork are structurally suitable, with complete removal as the alternative. The final consent should clearly identify the authorised specification.

Routine pruning would retain the defective stems and fork. Any lesser intervention must demonstrate that it adequately addresses those defects. Because a 4 m monolith would retain the fork and part of the cracked section, its suitability cannot be assumed from crown removal alone. We request prompt consideration of the proposed works in view of the public routes affected.

Information to complete before submission

Confirm the current Council reference and coverage of Area A1, ownership and the exact position of HC1 on a sketch plan. Add a detailed trunk-base photograph. Confirm the inspection method and whether any testing was undertaken. Check the recorded observations and estimated measurements with Ryan Dodds, including the opening-to-stem mapping. The client and inspector should review this report before it is submitted.

Before works, confirm the authorised specification, relevant ecological constraints, embedded metal locations, and safe access and public-route arrangements. Consent to tree works does not itself settle the suitability of climbing anchors or rigging points.

Council guidance

Horsham District Council requires arboricultural evidence for applications alleging defects affecting safe retention. The Council may request further supporting information. Guidance consulted 14 October 2026:

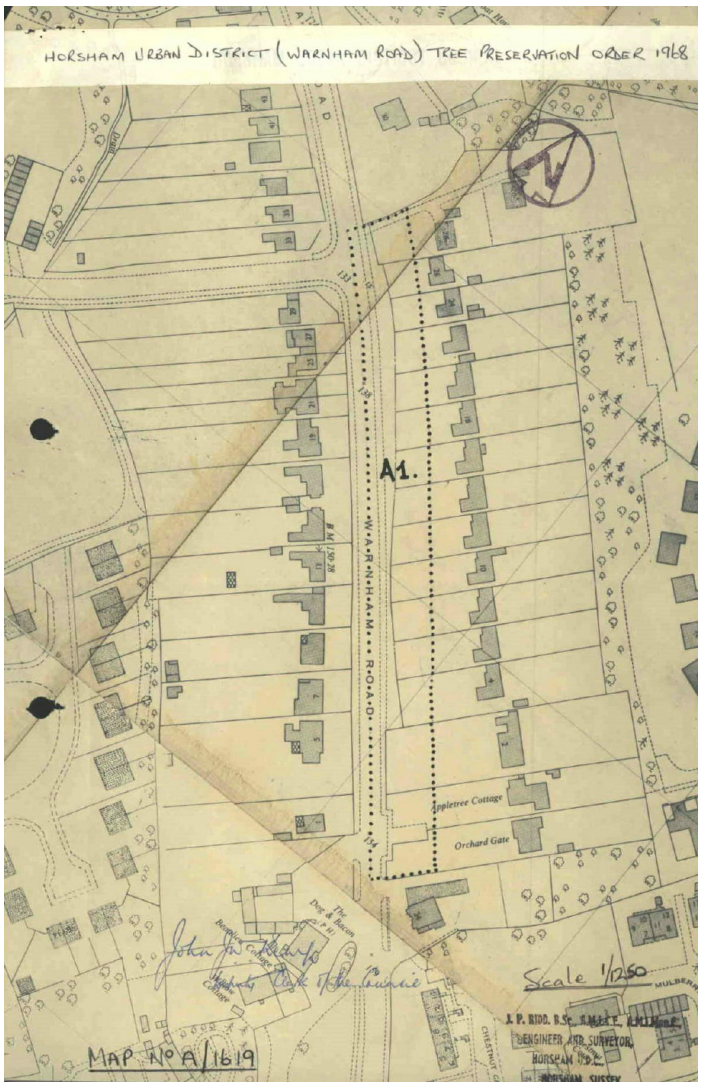
Horsham guidance on applying for works to a tree subject to a TPO (horsham.gov.uk).

Tree Preservation Order details

The supplied Order is titled Horsham Urban District (Warnham Road) Tree Preservation Order. The scan is indexed 0098 and bears a handwritten reference 98. It was sealed on 15 November 1968. The confirmation endorsement is dated 13 March 1969, subject to the modifications shown in red.

The First Schedule identifies Area A1, covering trees of any species standing within the dotted black boundary on the original plan. It describes a strip 75 ft (22.86 m) deep from the centre line of Warnham Road. No individual tree number is assigned to this horse chestnut in the supplied schedule. HC1 is our report reference, not an official TPO number.

The reported road-centre distance of approximately 11.9 m is consistent with the stated strip depth. Exact inclusion should be checked against the original boundary and tree position. The historic Order is supplied for identification; current consent procedures and any subsequent amendments should be confirmed with the Council.



Original Order plan, supplied PDF page 10. Reproduced for context; HC1 has not been plotted on this historic map.

Whole tree and setting



Overview supplied by GreenEdge. The tree stands on grass beside the driveway and near the road. Foliage obscures parts of the crown and fork. A detailed root collar view is not included.

Photographic appendix

South-facing cavity through opening 1



1A Opening 1 with exposed wood and wound margins.



1B Internal view through Hole 1.

Photographic appendix

South-facing cavity looking upwards through Hole 1



1C Looking upwards through Hole 1, showing the cavity continuing up the stem.

Photographic appendix

North-facing cavity through opening 2



2A Opening 2 on the north-facing stem, facing the property.



2B Close view of exposed wood within opening 2.

Photographic appendix

South-facing cavity through openings 3 and 4



3A Opening 3, reported to connect to the south-facing cavity.



4A Opening 4 at a reported old pruning wound; connection reported by GreenEdge.

Photographic appendix

South-facing opening 5 and reported crack



5A Opening 5. Historic branch breakage is suspected but unconfirmed.



6A Longitudinal separation at the fork, identified as a crack during inspection.

Photographic appendix

South-facing stem beside the road



6B Further view of the longitudinal crack identified during inspection.



6C Wider stem view with road in the background. No scale is provided.